



# The AKEY BRAKEY News

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a bi-annual newsletter from the Richland County Historical Society

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## LEVI H. BANCROFT (1861-1948) AN OUTSTANDING LAWYER

By EMERITUS PROFESSOR JERRY BOWER  
MARCH 2008

Levi Bancroft was born in Bear Creek, Richland County, on the day after Christmas, 1861. His parents were George and Helen Randolph Bancroft. The first Bancroft to arrive in America was John, who settled in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1640. John’s descendents, it is noted, fought in all of the colonies’ wars—the French and Indian Wars and the American Revolution—and in the War of 1812 and the Civil War, which had erupted just seven months before Levi’s birth. There is no information explaining how George and Helen Bancroft came to Wisconsin or Richland County.

Levi apparently had a normal childhood for a boy in that era. When old enough, he helped with farm chores. He attended country schools when offered until age 13, when his family moved to Lone Rock, where his father opened a general store. Levi now regularly attended the Lone Rock common school and helped in the general store. Levi became a qualified school teacher in 1878, when he was seventeen and two years before he graduated from Lone Rock high school. Levi immediately put his teacher’s certificate to good use, teaching for two years in his home town. One of those years he also was the principal of the high school. Next, Levi moved to Madison, where he attended the University Law School, graduating in 1884.

Levi began a very long legal career the following year when he entered a practice in Richland Center. For a year he commuted between Lone Rock and Richland Center on the short line railroad between the two communities. In 1886 Bancroft opened his own office, hiring a local carpenter to construct a suitable building for him, across the street from the Republican and Observer office. That same year he was elected District Attorney for Richland County. In politics, Levi was a staunch Republican his entire life. His success as a lawyer and his outstanding ability as a public speaker eventually won him appointment to important positions by Republican governors and by Republican presidents.

On 11 June 1890 Levi married Myrtle DeLap, the daughter of Dr. Robert DeLap, a local M. D. Myrtle, who had studied at the Art Institute in Chicago, became one of the state’s finest portrait artists. Over her lifetime, Myrtle earned about forty commissions, many of them for notable Wisconsin persons. Among these were paintings of Robert M. La Follette, the state’s outstanding governor and U.S. senator, Wisconsin Supreme Court justices Samuel Crawford and R. D. Marshall, renowned Milwaukee Judge George A. Shaughnessy, and Governor Edward Scofield. Locally, Myrtle was hired to paint W. H. Pier, the founder of the Richland County Bank. In 1930 Governor Walter J. Kohler, Sr., bought the La Follette portrait and gifted it to the State Historical Society, where it still hangs.

In early 1891 Bancroft became involved, as a defense attorney, in a local murder case that would earn him recognition across the entire state. His involvement lasted six years, through the initial trial and through numerous appeals. The alleged murderess was Rose Zoldosky, a young woman who had come to Richland Center from Missouri in 1888. Rose, an attractive woman, had quickly found employment at the Wilson Millinery Shop in the downtown.

*[Continued on Page 3]*

Rose found lodging with Dr. George Mitchell and his family. Rose appeared to fit in well with the family, as she often provided supervision for ten year old Freddie and, later, for his infant sister, Lottie, who was born in February 1890. Rose also often helped the housekeeper and hired girl with chores around the home. Rose joined the Methodist Church and was a member of its choir. Rose's alleged victim, Elly Maly, was also an attractive young woman. Elly was the daughter of A. W. Maly, a well known businessman. Elly had attended Wayland College, was employed in a local shop, and, although a Baptist, she sang in the Methodist choir and occasionally played the organ for services in that church.

The episode began with a celebratory party at the Mitchell home on the Friday evening of 8 January 1891. The party was hosted by Elly Maly for her good friend, Mae Hyndman, who was engaged to be married in a couple months. The other guests were of course Rose, Lilly Maly, Elly's sister, Irene Alling, and Allie Berryman. Also present were Mrs. Handy, the Mitchell's housekeeper, Anna McClaren, the hired girl, and Freddie Mitchell. The meal consisted of oyster soup, fresh oranges, and cake. During the meal Rose suddenly announced that she didn't feel well and she left and went to her room to lie down. About the time the others had finished eating, Rose returned, saying that she felt much better. The "girls" washed and dried the dishes and then prepared to leave. Rose accompanied the Maly sisters to the bedroom, where their wraps had been placed, and, before they left, gave both of them some chocolates from a small bag Rose retrieved from the top of a dresser.

The Maly sisters said their "thank yous" and went into the chilly night for the walk to their home. As they walked, Elly ate two pieces of the chocolates, remarking to Lilly that they tasted "bitter." Just a short distance farther Elly collapsed into a snowbank and went into convulsions. A passerby helped Lilly get her sister to her feet and to the Maly home. As Mrs. Maly took charge of her ill daughter, the passerby said to her, in German, that he thought Elly had been poisoned. Dr. Mitchell was summoned, and he soon asked Dr. Haskell to help him. Elly was treated with various medicines and, in the middle of the night, seemed to calm down. But, about 5 AM the convulsions returned and she died at 7 AM.

Because poisoning was the suspected cause of death, Rose Zoldosky immediately became a suspect. As the authorities investigated, they learned about and observed some strange behavior on Rose's part. For example, the housekeeper reported that, after the guests had departed, Rose ate a hearty meal and gave no sign of her earlier queasiness. Rose did not go to bed that night, but she went to work in the morning at the Wilson Millinery Shop at the usual time. When someone came into the shop to breathlessly report on Elly's death and that poisoning was suspected, Rose immediately became pale and faint and Mrs. Wilson helped her home. Later, apparently recovered, Rose asked Anna, the hired girl, if Anna thought a "murderer" could ever be saved. Anna told investigators that, after she told Rose that the Mitchell house was certain to be searched, Rose brought a small package from her room and threw it into the stove. Anna retrieved the partially burned parcel and discovered it was "croton oil." Croton oil is a thick bitter oil obtained from croton seeds; the oil is used externally as a counterirritant and internally to purge the bowels. At Ella's wake, held at the Methodist church because the Baptists were without a minister, Rose sat with the watchers but refused to view the body. At the funeral the next day, Rose started to go forward with several others to view Elly but she became faint and had to be helped next door to the parsonage. All of these facts, and more, would be recounted at the trial.

In the meantime, an autopsy was performed on Elly's organs and traces of strychnine were found. In a few days the organs, the stomach and liver, were sent to the Rush Medical College in Chicago for verification of the local finding. A positive report for strychnine arrived on 17 January. During this interval, Justice of the Peace Wulfing issued a warrant for Rose's arrest, which was executed on 14 January. Rose was lodged in the county jail to await trial. Rose, Marshal Chandler reported, cried a little when he arrested her. A coroner's inquest, held on 26 January, quickly issued a verdict of first degree murder.

Rose initially employed the firm of Burnham and Black to defend her, but the employment of one of the partners, Oscar F. Black, as a prosecutor caused her, obviously, to dismiss them. Now she hired Levi Bancroft to manage her case. She had made a good choice, according to Bancroft's reputation. Margaret Scott, in her History of Richland Center, described him "as a brilliant young lawyer who had not lost a criminal case." (102) An article in the Richland Observer, 23 December 1965, in reviewing the case, noted that Bancroft had already defended seven accused murderers and had won acquittals for five. *[Continued on Page 6]*

Bancroft went immediately to work. He petitioned Justice of the Peace Wulfing to dismiss the charges against Rose on the basis that there was no direct evidence linking her to Ella's death. Wulfing denied the petition and bound Rose over for trial during the April session of the Richland County Circuit Court. Now, Bancroft petitioned for a change of venue and for a substitute judge on the obvious basis that Rose could not have her case decided by an impartial jury due to all of the publicity about the death of Elly Maly and Rose's arrest. Wulfing granted the change of venue, sending the trial to Lancaster, where a Grant County jury would hear the case, but he denied the substitute judge request, and assigned Richland County Judge George Clementson to preside. With all the pretrial maneuvering, the trial was delayed until the September 1891 session of the court in Lancaster. Bancroft's legal maneuvers attracted more attention to the sensational case, and now some national newspapers began publishing "the latest" about it.

As we know from watching popular television shows, the prosecution needs to prove two things when an alleged murderer is not caught "red handed." Those are motive and opportunity. Prosecutors Oscar F. Black and Patrick Fay, of Richland County, set out to do exactly that. The motive, they plainly said, was Rose's view of Elly Maly as a rival for the affections of Dr. Mitchell. Dr. Mitchell's wife had died suddenly in March 1890, after suffering mysterious convulsions. Rose, among others, had taken on child care duties for an infant daughter, born in February 1890, and for Freddie, the ten year old son. Allegedly, Rose had "set her cap" for Dr. Mitchell shortly after his wife's death.

To support this theory, Mrs. Emma Hyndman, Mae's mother, testified that, in October 1890, Rose had asked her "to recommend Rose" to Dr. Mitchell. Mrs Hyndman also said that Rose told her Mrs Mitchell, while ill, had told Rose that, should she die, the Dr. would be courting her within two months and that the couple would be wed within six months. Dr. Moses Lovering testified that Rose had also asked him to speak to Dr. Mitchell on her behalf. Dr. Lovering testified that, later, he had received a hand written note from Rose containing a \$5.00 down payment on \$10.00 promised to Lovering, if his recommendation was successful. Lovering said he had tried to return the money but Rose refused to accept it. Additional testimony revealed that Rose's jealousy of Elly had intensified in December 1890 because Elly and Dr. Mitchell had worked together on a Christmas program for the Methodist church. On one occasion Dr. Mitchell had closed the door to the room where they were working, so that Rose could not see them. All of this seemed to establish a clear motive for Rose's alleged actions.

After evidence was introduced that strychnine poisoning was the cause of death, prosecutors Black and Fay proceeded to prove that Rose had easy access to the poison. Dr. Mitchell kept strychnine in the house, which he periodically used to mix a poison for rodents that infested the house. Indeed, on one such occasion, Rose and Freddy had watched the mixing process and discussed how lethal it was—just one-half grain would be enough to kill a person. All the people regularly in the Mitchell home knew where the strychnine was stored. Testimony from doctors about strychnine revealed that it had a strong bitter taste and that it would have to be concealed in certain foods, such as oysters or chocolates, to hide this taste.

When the prosecutors elicited testimony that Mrs. Mitchell had died unexpectedly in March 1890 of "seizures and convulsions," Bancroft objected vehemently. He argued that the prosecution had no legal right to bring this unrelated death into the trial unless the intent was to suggest that Rose had also poisoned Mrs. Mitchell. Judge Clementson overruled the objection, but did grant Bancroft's later request to have the body exhumed and examined for strychnine. After a few days' delay, Professor W. S. Haines of the Rush Medical College in Chicago took the stand and testified that he had found just a trace of strychnine in Mrs. Mitchell's organs but, he said, there must have been much more present at the time of death because strychnine decomposes rapidly. Bancroft, in cross examination, brought out that Dr. Mitchell had treated his wife with nux vomica and belladonna, both of which contained "almost insignificant amounts of strychnine."

When the defense's turn arrived, Bancroft hammered hard on the circumstantial evidence presented by the prosecution. He noted that anyone in the Mitchell home had access to the poison, even guests who might have observed where it was kept. The poison clearly could not have been in the oyster soup because only Elly was stricken. Moreover, and more importantly, there could not have been strychnine in the chocolates because the remaining candies in Elly's pocket and all of Lilly's, when examined, contained no poison! Bancroft also questioned the handling of Elly's body and organs by the Richland County authorities. He drew out testimony that both had been left unguarded in the basement of the Courthouse, while awaiting transfer of the organs to Chicago for further tests.

*[Continued on Page 7]*

Bancroft intimated that “anyone” could have placed strychnine in Elly’s organs while they were unguarded. He made much of the fact that the tests at Rush Medical College revealed strychnine in Elly’s stomach but none in her liver. Bancroft suggested that Elly Maly had died of a “fit.” He drew out testimony that Lilly Maly had sometimes disrupted school with uncontrollable laughter and weeping. The girls’ father, A. W. Maly, had died of a “sudden fit” at Lone Rock. Bancroft argued that the family “is subject to hysteria and probably epilepsy.” Co-workers testified that Elly had left work the fatal evening with “a flushed and burning face.” The reporters, several of whom attended daily, were waiting for Rose to take the stand in her own defense. They had noted in their articles that Rose had maintained her composure throughout the proceedings. They also commented often on her beauty and her attractive attire—a black silk dress and silk mittens. They noted that her habit of making eye contact with the witnesses seemed to make them uncomfortable. But, the defense rested without calling Rose! Afterward, it was revealed that two of Rose’s cousins, Henry Foltz and John Gottschalk, had hired a Madison lawyer, H. W. Chenoweth, to join Rose’s defense. Because of his greater experience, Chenoweth became the lead lawyer and he overrode Rose’s and Bancroft’s desire to have her testify. Chenoweth’s reason was that he believed the prosecution’s circumstantial evidence was too weak to secure a conviction.

The Lancaster jury, twelve men, deliberated twenty-two hours before delivering a verdict of “guilty of murder in the first degree.” Judge Clementson sentenced Rose to 99 years in the state prison at Waupun. At Waupun Rose became an isolated prisoner. When questioned, the warden said that Rose had chosen to isolate herself; she was not a troublesome inmate but she did not associate with others and did not participate in any activities. And, all the time, she stoutly maintained her innocence.

Levi Bancroft, too, believed in Rose’s innocence. Shortly after the trial, he appealed to Judge Clementson to grant a new trial. The major basis for the request was that jurors, interviewed after the verdict, had said they were influenced by the fact that Rose had not testified in her own defense. Clementson denied the motion, and Bancroft moved the request to an appeals court. In a few months, the appeals court upheld Clementson’s decision. Now Bancroft made an appeal for a new trial to the state Supreme Court. The top court, after reviewing the transcripts and Bancroft’s thirteen legal points in favor of a new trial, announced its decision after its January 1892 session. The justices unanimously rejected every one of Bancroft’s arguments and concluded their opinion with these words, “The defendant has been faithfully, zealously, and ably defended, and in the trial and proceedings resulting in her conviction of this great crime, we are satisfied that no error has intervened to her prejudice, and that the judgment of the circuit court must be affirmed.”

Now that all legal appeals had been exhausted, Bancroft turned to tirelessly seeking executive clemency for Rose. A huge appeal package was sent to Governor George W. Peck in January 1894. In the papers was a petition signed by over 2,000 citizens of Grant and Richland Counties, Richland Center, Eau Claire, and Cumberland, where the now married May Hyndman lived. Personal letters had been sent by Mrs. Wilson, Rose’s employer, George Krouskop, former Richland Center banker, B. F. Washburn, Richland County Assemblyman, and F. C. Chamberlain, a prominent Michigan attorney and member of the Michigan legislature. Bancroft asserted three major reasons why Rose should be granted clemency. First, all the evidence against Rose was purely circumstantial, and there were several other persons to whom the same circumstances could apply. Second, the motive for Rose’s alleged actions was “purely theoretical.” Finally, the prosecution, through its many witnesses, had failed in any way to directly connect Rose to Elly Maly’s death.

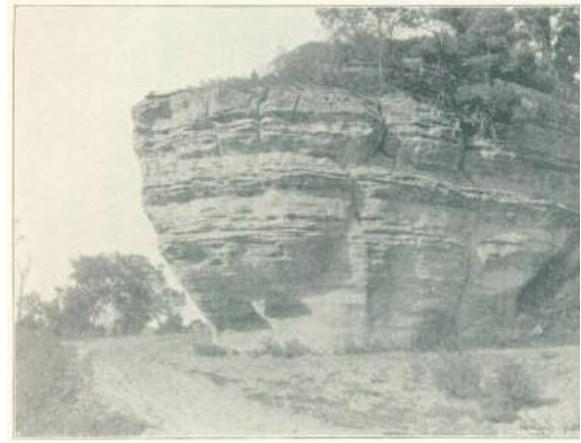
Rose Zoldosky sent a long letter to Governor Peck to argue her own case. She said she would never harm Ella Maly because they were “on the most friendly terms.” Rose claimed she and Mrs. Mitchell also were very close; Rose regarded Mrs. Mitchell as “almost like her mother.” After Mrs. Mitchell died, Rose asserted that Dr. Mitchell and his sister had urged Rose to remain in the Mitchell home because the Mitchell children were much attached her. Rose claimed that the fatal party was primarily the idea of Ella Maly, who wanted to reward May Hyndman for playing the organ at the Methodist Church in Ella’s absence and to celebrate May’s pending marriage. As a good friend Rose had helped Ella put the party together by buying the oranges and oysters for the supper and by arranging for it to be held at the Mitchell home. Rose explained that she had also bought a small bag of chocolates at Constantine’s Store and that she had given some to both Ella and Lilly Maly. Rose related that she and Bancroft had decided to have her testify at her trial, but her cousins and the Madison lawyer they hired, F. W. Chenoweth, had insisted that she not testify. Rose had later learned that some of the jurors had interpreted her not testifying as evidence of guilt. *[continued in the October 2018 edition]*

<http://content.mpl.org/cdm/ref/collection/rchr/id/5031>



"Steamboat Rock", Rockbridge Township, Richland County, Wisconsin, 1907  
The likeness is so striking that it is correctly named by strangers at first sight and it is truly a wonderful freak of nature." Steamboat Rock is located in Section 27 of Rockbridge Township.

<http://content.mpl.org/cdm/ref/collection/rchr/id/2046>



From State Bank souvenir booklet, "STEAMBOAT ROCK" a massive and imposing rock jutting out into the highway leading north from Richland Center.

<https://parkscommission.co.richland.wi.us/points-of-interest/special-things-to-do/Rock Formations and Countryside Tours> --- Richland County -- featuring Steamboat Rock

Tour Richland County's fabulous rock formations. Visit Eagle Cave, Wisconsin's largest onyx cave. Wonder at the remarkable forces that fashioned the "Natural Bridge" located in Pier County Park, marvel at the massive, layered sculpturing of **Steamboat Rock** and the whimsical construction of Elephant Rock. Meander through the Ocooch Mountains where crystal clear springs, gurgling streams and rushing rivers flow through deep and verdant valleys and horizontal limestone outcroppings along the hillcrests look from the distance to the homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Points of Interest

Nestled in the unglaciated hills and narrow valleys of Wisconsin's scenic Southwest, Richland County is full of natural wonders, historic sites, homes and commercial buildings crafted in the 19th century. In Richland County you will find a warehouse designed by the county's most famous son, widely acclaimed as the greatest architect of the 20th Century, Frank Lloyd Wright. Richland County's scenery is stunning. Rivers and streams flow through green valleys between towering wooded bluffs and hills; prosperous family farmsteads wrested from the forest more than 150 years ago paint geometric crop patterns across the valleys and rolling hillsides. Wisconsin's largest onyx cave, Eagle Cave, tunnels through it. Spectacular geologic formations like Elephant Rock, Natural Bridge, and **Steamboat Rock** spring-up unexpectedly from the landscape.

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**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

by *Nick Studnicka*

The 2018 Akey School Season is coming up! We are looking for volunteers to help keep the museum open each Sunday during the season. Please contact me at [studnicn@hotmail.com](mailto:studnicn@hotmail.com) if interested.

Upcoming Projects: We will be looking at the bell of the school. During the summer the rope snapped, we are hoping for an easy fix. Looking to the future of the Akey School I would like to either repaint the exterior of the building, after scraping off all of the old and loose paint, or would like to reside the building with vinyl/ solid plastic siding. I am looking for suggestions and or possible volunteering time to lessen the cost of repainting.

The Akey School Museum is open Sundays from June thru September from 1 to 4 pm.

**Directions to the AKEY SCHOOL MUSEUM**

located east from Richland Center off Hwy 14 about four miles south on County TB or from Gotham on Hwy 60 west a mile and then north on County TB about four miles.

**Please Come and Visit this SUMMER !**



## **“RE-SEARCHING” THE EARLY HISTORY OF RICHLAND COUNTY**

This article concept was introduced in earlier editions to provide for ongoing information highlighting various topics of local interest.

\*\* excerpted from <http://www.usgenweb.info/wirichland/books/1906-4.htm>

*Early importance for travel in the county was along water to access the abundance of timber. Note these selections as they identify the importance of both water and wood in the ‘Early History of Richland County’.*

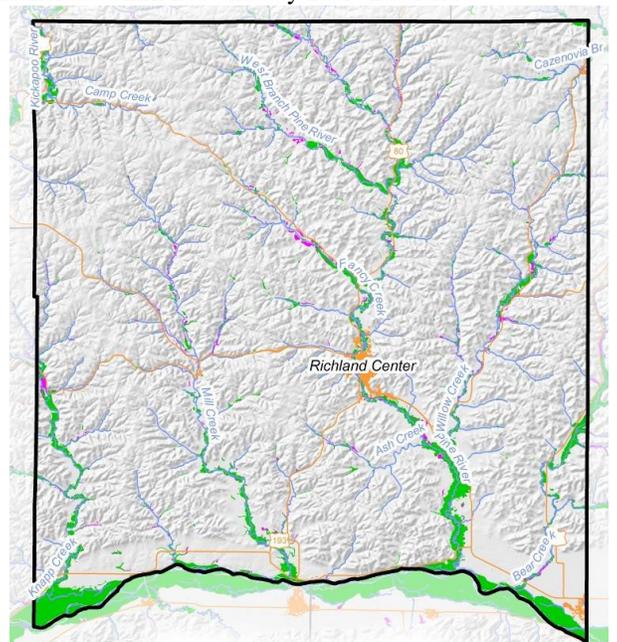
... "The water-power of the county is immense, as there are crystal streams, supplied by pure, gushing fountains, running through the county in every direction. Richland Creek, Bird's Creek, Eagle Creek, and Bear Creek rise near the north and run to the south line of the county, all affording more or less hydraulic power, and are filled with a great variety of fish, from the largest catfish to the delicious speckled trout. But these are mere brooks compared with the majestic Pine River, which originates from innumerable springs in the northern and western part of this county. Each, after winding through and watering farm after farm, uniting with others as it journeys down this magnificent valley, combines in forming this notable Pine river, which empties itself, near the southeast corner of the county, into that important tributary of the Father of Waters, the Wisconsin river. This Pine River and its tributaries equal in extent and magnitude all the other streams within the county, and if you add to these the Baraboo, which flows through and waters the northeast corner, and the Kickapoo in the northwest corner, it will readily be seen that we have one of the best watered sections in the world."

"... So much for water. As to wood, which, besides water, is a chief object of the emigrant's search, it is sufficient to say that one-half of the territory is a dense forest, affording as great a variety of timber as can be found anywhere in this climate. Not infrequently at the bottom of the hideous bluffs of which we spoke, a choice mill site is to be found, or at least a fountain of cool and living water, worth more than double the amount of smooth prairie land so much admired by the casual observer."

... "As the traveler leaves Richland City, to explore the interior of the county, he is compelled to go north (all routes of travel here either follow the ridges or the valleys of the streams), and after traveling about a mile, a road from the east comes in and adds to the travel. Passing on a mile further, another road finds its way round the base of the bluffs from the southeast. Soon the traveler finds himself hemmed in with bluffs and tamarack swamps, with appearances ahead decidedly unfavorable, until he has gone about five miles from Richland City, when, to his astonishment, he finds himself beyond swamps, the bluffs fall back and give way to a respectable stream on the east, Willow creek on the north, the Pine River from the northwest and Ash creek from the west forming a fertile basin of five miles in extent from east to west, and three miles from north to south, in the center of which the flourishing village of Sextonville bursts upon the sight of the traveler, strongly contrasting with the region of swamps and bluffs through which he has passed. Nature has bestowed upon this point great advantages. Its water-power, located as it is at the junction of so many streams, is of immense value, though as yet only improved to a limited extent. A saw and grist-mill is owned by Jacob Krouskop, the grist-mill with one run of stone in successful operation and the second nearly completed. Another saw-mill is owned by D. T. Eastland."

... "The healthiness of its location, its great water-power, and the facilities of access to it from every direction, the varied nature of the land in its vicinity, comprising both prairie and timber, upland and bottom land, and its advantages as a business point, have attracted the attention of a number of capitalists, some of whom have already invested, and others are preparing to invest considerable sums in improvements the coming season. This place is bound to go ahead. It has an advantage over Richland City, in the fact that owing to the shape of the country, travel from the south and east will not necessarily pass that point to get to other points in the center and northern portions of this county, and in Bad Axe, La Crosse, and Adams Counties, where the travel sooner or later must be immense, while nearly all this travel must pass through Sextonville. "

... "Seven miles above Sextonville, on the Pine River, is Richland Center, already a flourishing little town, and the county seat. It has a good water-power, and although deprived by nature of many advantages possessed by other localities, its central position and the fact that it is the 'seat of justice' of this great county, invite settlement and improvement, and its future prosperity is almost certain."



[continued from Page 4]

Importance of Early Water & Wood in Richland County

... "Rockbridge, nine miles above Richland Center, and sixteen above Sextonville, with one saw-mill and a turning-lathe, does not progress as fast as those nearer the Wisconsin River. Still it is not without its attractions. A natural bridge of a perpendicular sand rock, forty or fifty feet high, across the west branch of the Pine River, with two or three dilapidated buildings, render it a desirable spot for those who entertain exalted ideas of the charm which sages tell us they have enjoyed in their solitary abodes."

... "Ash Creek affords considerable water-power, and a small saw and grist mill, owned by William Thompson is already in successful operation. This point contributes considerably to the support of the business done at Sextonville, as its location is in the same valley and only three miles distant. It remains to speak of the most important tributary of the Pine, viz., the Willow River. This stream, affording numberless water-powers, is now settled more or less for some fifteen miles north of Sextonville. Mr. Perkins has a saw-mill on this stream five miles north of Sextonville, and Messrs. Sippy and Gwinn also have one, seven miles from Sextonville. Twelve miles up the Willow, Messrs. Sexton and Stewart have built a saw-mill, and founded the town of Loyd, of the ultimate success of which, allowing time for it to develop its resources, there can be little doubt. It is in the geographical center of Willow Township, in the midst of a fertile country abounding with the best of timber, with water well distributed, and which is rapidly settling up with a moral, industrious and enterprising class of inhabitants, never excelled and rarely equaled in the pioneer settlements of the west. With a good water-power and owned by liberal proprietors, of some experience in buildings towns, it can hardly fail to succeed. There is a good opening here for merchants, mechanics, grocers, tavern keepers, doctors and lawyers. The two latter might possibly have to resort to the crystal brooks and practice trout-fishing for a livelihood, trout being plenty and the country distressingly healthy, and the people remarkably honest."

... "Bear Creek is a stream which rises in Sauk county, waters one of the pleasantest and wealthiest prairie valleys in the region, and empties into the Wisconsin, in the southeast corner of this county, and near where the Milwaukee and Mississippi railroad crosses that river, where a large business town will be likely to spring up and be sustained by the surrounding portions of Sauk and Richland counties."

... "Much of this county lying on hillsides, and the wash of rains destroying the traveled thoroughfares, the question of plank roads came to the front in 1856. In answer to several petitions, asking that companies might be empowered to build such roads and enjoy the benefits and emoluments thereof, the board appointed a committee to look into the matter. The report of the committee was favorable to the project, but for some reason the plank roads never materialized."

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*It has now been a decade since the Hwy 60 corridor was dedicated. Here's a flashback article for review.*

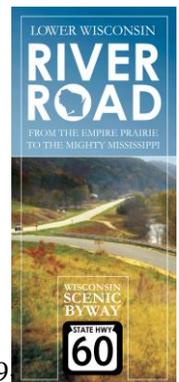
### MAGIC ON A GRAND SCALE

From the Empire Prairie to the Mighty Mississippi, Wisconsin's 100-mile Scenic Byway 60 follows the graceful curves of the Lower Wisconsin River. This patch of our planet sparkles, by sunny day or starry night, with the wild beauty of Nature left to its own devices for thousands and thousands of years. And nowhere is Heraclitus's adage that you can't step into the same river twice more apt. In constant flux, the "River of a Thousand Isles" continuously sculpts its sandbars, shifts its channels, varies its flows, and repaints its colors according to the whims of the weather gods.

Here golden bluffs crop out of emerald hills and valleys that roll into rushing streams to the lively river. These waters beckon fishers, canoers, kayakers, and boaters. Here birdwatchers and botanists can go bananas while, chances are, an eagle is watching them. As transcendent as the ancient Driftless area landscape itself is the history encoded in its formations. Hundreds of effigy mound earthworks, still alive to the touch, stand today as spiritual gifts and messages from those who peopled this land in the deep past.

The more recent settlements on the Byway route from Lodi to Prairie du Chien have tried to complement rather than conflict with the pristine qualities of Driftless Nature. Each has its own enticing history and contemporary flavor. They offer a rich range of camping, lodging, dining, outdoor and indoor recreation, archeological pursuits, and other learning options. They welcome both the seriously energetic and those who seek some serious relaxation. They invite families to experience together this special place, the magic of which has inspired a local goal: No Child Left Inside.

<https://sites.google.com/site/lowerwisconsinriverroad/>



Dedication of Scenic Byway 60 on 4/27/09

**Check out our website for the past issues of the AKEY BrAKEY News**

**➔ [www.richlandcountyhistoricalsociety.weebly.com](http://www.richlandcountyhistoricalsociety.weebly.com)**



